

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE: State Summary

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Surveillance

Marriage and divorce certificates serve as legal documentation of marital status, and provide limited surveillance information useful in describing current and changing societal attitudes that impact individual and family relationships. Successful marriages often result in emotional and economic supports helpful in achieving adequate levels of health and living standards for family members. Divorce is associated with the loss of psychological and economic supports, and with an increase in the risk of poor health and economic disadvantage for family members. Changes in marriage and divorce rates and demographics, such as the average age at marriage, can indicate population shifts in family size and family economic stability.

Source of Data: Certificate of Marriage

Information on marriages presented in this report is obtained from data recorded on the *Certificate of Marriage* completed for marriages that occurred in Louisiana in the 1997 calendar year.

Louisiana law requires that marriage certificates be submitted by the parish clerks of court to the Vital Records Registry prior to the tenth of the month following the marriage. The law also requires that the social security numbers of the bride and groom remain confidential.

It is estimated that certificates for at least 95% of marriages occurring annually in Louisiana are filed with Vital Records.

Source of Data: Certificate of Divorce or Annulment

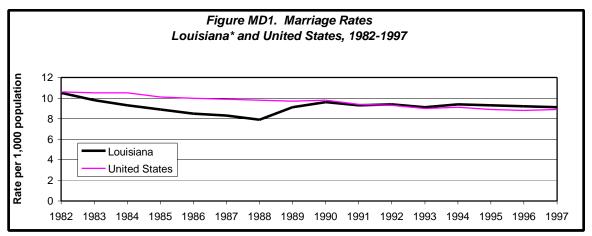
Divorce information presented in this report is obtained from the *Certificate of Divorce or Annulment* and from summary divorce counts submitted by parish clerks of court for divorces that occurred in Louisiana in the 1997 calendar year. Louisiana law requires that divorce certificates be submitted to the Vital Records Registry prior to the tenth of the month following the divorce, and that the identities of the registrants remain confidential.

Unfortunately, many Louisiana parishes do not submit divorce certificates to the central registry, and incomplete information is submitted by many parishes that do file certificates. The divorce tabulations included in this report reflect summary divorce counts made by the clerks of court, as well as data derived from actual certificates received in the central office. Because of poor reporting, Louisiana is excluded from the national divorce registration system.

MARRIAGE

Counts and Rates

- In 1997, a total of 39,662 marriages were held in Louisiana, a decrease of 559 marriages from the 1996 total of 40,221.
- Using data reported by the parish in which the marriage occurred, Louisiana's 1997 marriage rate was 9.1 marriages per 1,000 population. This was a decrease of 0.1% from the 1996 rate of 9.2 per 1,000 population.
- After dropping to a low of 7.9 per 1,000 population in 1988, Louisiana's marriage rates through the 1990s have been stable and have remained above 9.0 per 1,000 population (Figure MD1, Table MD1).
- National and state marriage rates were approximately equal in the early 1980s, but a steep decline in state
 rates during the 1980s caused them to fall below national rates as the decade progressed. In the 1990s,
 however, state rates have risen to a level slightly higher than national rates (Figure MD1, Table MD1).



*Louisiana rates are based on parish of occurrence for all parishes Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

The *marriage rate* measures marriages occurring in a population during a given period of time. It is calculated by dividing the number of marriages occurring in a geographic area during one year by the total population of the area, then multiplying the quotient by 1,000. The rate is expressed as the number of marriages per 1,000 population. Marriage rates would be more representative of Louisiana resident marriages if they were calculated using the number of marriages to *residents* of an area, rather than the number of marriages *occurring* in an area. Marriage counts by residence of bride and groom are difficult to quantify, however, because couples often choose to marry outside their residence area.

Table MD1. Marriage Counts and Rates Louisiana and United States, 1982-1997									
	Louisi		United States						
Year	Number	Rate*	Rate*						
1982	45485	10.5	10.6						
1983	43107	9.8	10.5						
1984	41088	9.3	10.5						
1985	39357	8.9	10.1						
1986	37459	8.5	10.0						
1987	36185	8.3	9.9						
1988	33974	7.9	9.8						
1989	38574	9.1	9.7						
1990	40443	9.6	9.8						
1991	39161	9.3	9.4						
1992	40053	9.4	9.3						
1993	39364	9.1	9.0						
1994	40405	9.4	9.1						
1995	40516	9.3	8.9						
1996	40221	9.2	8.8						
1997	39662	9.1	8.9						

^{*}Rate per 1,000 population

Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics National Center for Health Statistics

Age of the Bride and Groom

• The largest proportion of Louisiana brides (26.5%) fell into the 20-24 year age group, while the largest proportions of grooms were fairly evenly distributed between the 20-24 and the 25-29 year age groups (22.4% and 23.8%, respectively)(Table MD2).

	Table MD2. Marriage Counts by Age of Groom and Age of Bride Louisiana, 1997															
Age of							4	Age o	f Bride	е						
Groom	Total	Under 15	15-17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	<i>70</i> +	Unk.
Total	39662	11	840	3236	10504	8616	5367	3825	2656	1748	911	448	262	193	169	876
LT-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15-17	124	3	63	35	20	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18-19	1465	1	327	710	344	51	11	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
20-24	8880	3	358	1947	5150	1076	222	61	16	8	3	-	-	-	-	36
25-29	9447	-	62	383	3565	3913	1045	304	93	21	11	-	-	-	1	49
30-34	6131	3	18	102	938	2197	1777	717	253	88	12	5	-	2	-	19
35-39	4309	1	6	33	309	847	1287	1101	483	169	40	9	3	1	-	20
40-44	3072	-	2	8	86	304	599	860	752	324	95	19	2	-	-	21
45-49	2120	-	1	4	35	124	256	474	530	480	166	34	6	2	-	8
50-54	1384	-	-	1	12	47	103	169	307	383	237	86	20	9	1	9
55-59	722	-	-	1	3	11	29	58	116	150	171	134	30	14	3	2
60-64	486	-	-	-	1	9	12	33	51	81	108	80	62	35	10	4
65-69	286	-	-	-	1	3	3	15	20	19	35	39	71	52	25	3
70+	402	-	-	-	1	4	6	12	17	16	32	38	67	77	129	3
Unk.	834	-	3	12	39	27	17	16	14	9	1	4	1	1	-	690

⁺Louisiana data are based on parish of occurrence for 64 parishes

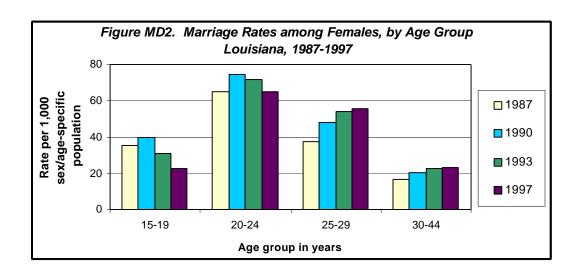
The average age of Louisiana brides was 29.8 years; the average for grooms was 32.3 years. Over the
past few years, there has been a steady increase in the ages of men and women who marry in
Louisiana (Table MD3).

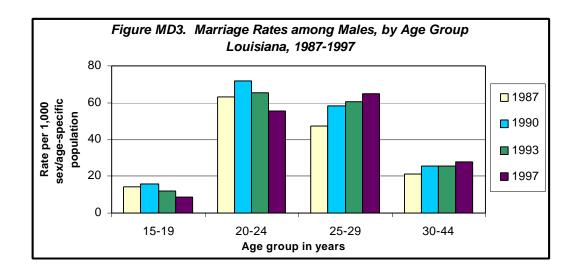
Table MD3. Average and Median Ages of Brides and Grooms Louisiana, 1997								
Year of	Average Ag	e in Years	Median Ag	e in Years				
Marriage	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom				
1992	28.6	31.0	25.3	27.5				
1993	28.7	31.0	25.4	27.6				
1994	29.0	31.0	25.6	27.8				
1995	29.4	32.0	26.1	28.2				
1996	29.6	32.0	26.3	28.4				
1997	29.8	32.3	26.4	28.7				

• During the 1990s, there has been a decrease in the rate of marriage in younger age groups, and an increase in rates seen in older age groups. Following a rise in the early 1990s, marriage rates have declined during the 1990s in men and women below age 24. This same time period has seen a steady increase in marriage rates in both sexes for men and women over age 24 (Table MD4, Figures MD2 and MD3).

Table MD4. Marriage Rates* by Sex and Age Louisiana, 1987-1997									
	15-	19	20-	-24	25	-29	30-	-44	
Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
1987	35.4	14.0	65.2	63.3	37.6	47.3	16.4	21.1	
1990	39.6	15.8	74.7	71.9	47.8	58.2	20.6	25.5	
1993	30.7	12.1	71.7	65.3	53.8	60.5	22.5	25.8	
1997	22.6	8.6	64.9	55.6	55.7	64.8	23.3	27.9	

^{*}Rate per 1,000 sex/age-specific population





Prior Marital Status

- 47.2% of all marriages were first marriages for both the bride and the groom; 58.8% of all brides and 59.3% of all grooms entered into first marriages (Table MD5).
- In 22.5% of all marriages, both the bride and the groom were previously divorced; 35.3% of all brides and 35.4% of all grooms were previously divorced (Table MD5).

Table MD5. Marriage Counts by Previous Marital Status of Bride and Groom Louisiana, 1997								
		Pr	evious Marital	Status of Brid	e			
Previous Marital Status		Never			Marriage			
of Groom	Total	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Annulled	Unknown		
All	39662	23320	1194	14015	30	1103		
Never Married	23515	18711	202	4472	10	120		
Widowed	1046	134	375	532	-	5		
Divorced	14053	4392	605	8920	19	117		
Marriage Annulled	30	14	1	14	1	-		
Unknown	1018	69	11	77	-	861		

• The past 10 years have seen an 8.7% percent decline in the number of marriages in which both the bride and the groom were never married, and a 25% increase in the percent of marriages in which both the bride and groom were previously divorced (Table MD6).

Tabl	Table MD6. Percents of Marriages by Previous Marital Status of Bride and Groom Louisiana, 1987-1997								
	Never Married Divorced								
Year	Bride	Groom	Both	Bride	Groom	Both			
1987	62.7	63.0	51.7	29.7	30.1	18.0			
1990	63.2	63.3	52.0	31.8	32.3	19.9			
1993	60.7	61.2	49.3	34.3	34.6	21.8			
1997	58.8	59.3	47.2	35.3	35.4	22.5			

• The median ages in marriages of previously divorced brides and grooms were approximately 16 years higher than those in marriages between never-married brides and grooms (Table MD7).

Table MD7. Average and Median Age of Bride and Groom at this Marriage, by Previous Marital Status Louisiana, 1997								
	Avera	ge Age	Media	n Age				
Previous Marital Status	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom				
All	29.8	32.3	26.4	28.7				
Bride Previously Unmarried, Groom Previously Unmarried	23.9	25.9	22.4	24.3				
Bride Previously Unmarried, Groom Previously Married	29.0	35.5	27.0	33.1				
Bride Previously Married, Groom Previously Unmarried	32.5	31.1	30.6	29.1				
Bride Previously Married, Groom Previously Married	39.5	43.0	37.7	41.1				

Race of Bride and Groom

- In 97% of all marriages, both the bride and groom were of the same race. In 69.4% of marriages, both were white. In 26.7% of all marriages, both were black. In 0.8% of marriages, both were of another race (Table MD8, MD9).
- 2.8% of marriages were mixed race, with 1.7% of total marriages being between whites and blacks (Table MD8, MD9).

Table MD8. Marriage Counts by Race of Groom and Race of Bride Louisiana, 1997								
Race of Groom		Race of Bride						
All Races	All Races	All Races White Black Other Unknown						
	39662	28171	10875	547	69			
White	27998	27533	236	199	30			
Black	11075	431	10593	38	13			
Other	526	526 180 35 309 2						
Unknown	63	27	11	1	24			

Table MD9. Percents of Total Marriages by Race of Groom and Race of Bride Louisiana, 1997								
Race of Groom	Race of Bride							
All Races	All Races	All Races White Black Other Unknown						
	100.00	71.03	27.42	1.38	0.17			
White	70.59	69.42	0.60	0.50	0.08			
Black	27.92	1.09	26.71	0.10	0.03			
Other	1.33	1.33 0.45 0.09 0.78 0.01						
Unknown	0.16	0.07	0.03	0.003	0.06			

Month of Marriage

• On average, 3,300 marriages occurred each month. In January, the number was lower (2,164 marriages); in June, the traditional month for marriages to occur, it was higher (4,016, or 10.1% of all marriages) (Figure MD4, Table MD10).

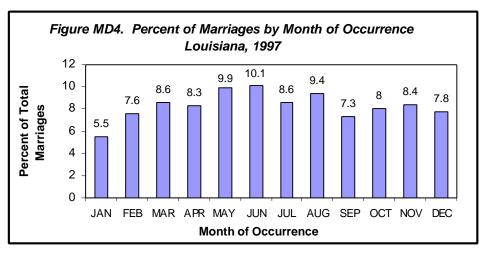


Table MD10. Counts and Percents of Marriages by Month of Occurrence Louisiana, 1997								
Month	Number	Percent	Daily Average					
			,					
Total	39662	100.0	109					
January	2164	5.5	70					
February	3002	7.6	107					
March	3393	8.6	109					
April	3308	8.3	110					
May	3919	9.9	126					
June	4016	10.1	134					
July	3414	8.6	110					
August	3714	9.4	120					
September	2881	7.3	96					
October	3160	8.0	102					
November	3346	8.4	112					
December	3112	7.8	100					
Unknown	233	-	-					

Covenant Marriage

Beginning August 14, 1997, Louisiana residents applying for marriage licenses have been given a choice between a traditional marriage and a covenant marriage. A **covenant marriage** differs from a traditional marriage in that the couple agrees to complete premarital counseling, and signs a notarized affidavit in which they agree to seek marital counseling if problems develop during the marriage and to accept a limited set of grounds for legal separation or divorce.

• Between August and December 1997, there were 147 covenant marriages in Louisiana (Table MDP1)

DIVORCE

Counts

- Divorces reports are submitted by approximately 75% of the 64 parishes in Louisiana each year. In 1997, 46
 parishes submitted reports of divorces to the state Many of the certificates that were submitted contained incomplete information.
- There were a total of 13,836 divorces in the 46 parishes which submitted divorce counts. No counts were available for 18 of Louisiana's 64 parishes (Table MDP1).

The *divorce rate* measures divorces occurring in a population during a given period of time. It is calculated by dividing the number of divorces occurring in a geographic area by the total population of the area, then multiplying the quotient by 1,000. The rate is expressed as the number of divorces per 1,000 population. Because of underreporting of divorces by many parishes in Louisiana, it is not possible to calculate state-level divorce rates using data submitted by all 64 parishes.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE: Parish Tables

TABL	TABLE MDP1: MARRIAGES, FINAL DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS GRANTED LOUISIANA, 1997						
DADIOLI	BY PARISH OF	MARRIAGES BY PARISH OF	COVENANT	DIVORCES BY PARISH	ANNULMENTS BY PARISH		
PARISH	ISSUE OF LICENSE	OCCURRENCE	(AFTER 8/14/97)	GRANTING DECREE	GRANTING DECREE		
STATE	39662	39662	147	13836	106		
ACADIA	444	478	2	225	5		
ALLEN	235	239	1	*	*		
ASCENSION	701	651	2	364	2		
ASSUMPTION AVOYELLES	159 382	183	0	46	0		
BEAUREGARD	362	420 315	0 1	134	2		
BIENVILLE	112	156	Ö	72	2		
BOSSIER	790	1004	4	553	1		
CADDO	2295	1970	4	1122	1		
CALCASIEU	2136	1987	4	828	0		
CALDWELL	97	106	0	71	0		
CAMERON	61	89 121	0	19	0		
CATAHOULA CLAIBORNE	105 97	121 106	1 1	28 54	0		
CONCORDIA	244	225	0	26	0		
DESOTO	150	187	2	*	*		
E BATON ROUGE	3557	3259	24	2036	35		
EAST CARROLL	35	51	1	20	0		
E FELICIANA	168	191	0	67	0		
EVANGELINE	287	328	0	80	4		
FRANKLIN GRANT	211 94	201 135	0 0	124	0		
IBERIA	594	618	0	*	*		
IBERVILLE	203	273	1	*	*		
JACKSON	138	128	0	3	0		
JEFFERSON	4044	3672	13	2255	5		
JEFF DAVIS	281	300	1	127	0		
LAFAYETTE LAFOURCHE	1646 770	1460 741	10 1	393	1		
LASALLE	146	152	Ö	69	Ö		
LINCOLN	403	332	4	174	Ö		
LIVINGSTON	730	871	3	*	*		
MADISON	127	121	1	*	*		
MOREHOUSE	212	213	1	150	3 1		
NATCHITOCHES ORLEANS	346 4908	383 5334	0 16	147 719	0		
OUACHITA	1189	1163	10	866	3		
PLAQUEMINES	154	216	0	93	0		
POINTE COUPEE	158	189	1	81	7		
RAPIDES	1248	1242	8	630	12		
RED RIVER	107	104	1	*	*		
RICHLAND SABINE	152 196	165 203	0 1	129	0		
ST BERNARD	664	626	4	338	0		
ST CHARLES	345	326	Ö	185	0		
ST HELENA	25	37	0	*	*		
ST JAMES	127	191	0	5	1		
ST JOHN	290	307	0	5	0		
ST LANDRY ST MARTIN	768 309	785 345	0 2	253 68	21 0		
ST MARY	540	537	1	68 *	U *		
ST TAMMANY	1725	1724	11	*	*		
TANGIPAHOA	964	931	1	171	0		

TABLE MDP1: MARRIAGES, FINAL DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS GRANTED LOUISIANA, 1997								
		MARRIAGES		DIVORCES	ANNULMENTS			
	BY PARISH OF	BY PARISH OF	COVENANT	BY PARISH	BY PARISH			
PARISH	ISSUE OF	OCCURRENCE	(AFTER	GRANTING	GRANTING			
	LICENSE		8/14/97)	DECREE	DECREE			
TENSAS	42	58	0	*	*			
TERREBONNE	944	973	2	575	0			
UNION	143	151	2	78	0			
VERMILION	389	419	0	199	1			
VERNON	591	610	2	13	0			
WASHINGTON	386	388	1	*	*			
WEBSTER	374	329	1	110	0			
W BATON ROUGE	234	179	1	*	*			
WEST CARROLL	73	89	0	*	*			
W FELICIANA	89	157	0	45	0			
WINN	186	185	0	86	1			
OUT OF STATE	-	33	-	*	*			

^{*}NO DIVORCE OR ANNULMENT DATA REPORTED BY CLERK OF COURT

PARISH GROOM NILY BRIDE AND GROOM BRIDE ONLY TOTAL STATE 4532 BRIDE AND GROOM BRIDE ONLY TOTAL ACADIA 53 770 74 887 ALLEN 45 342 47 434 ASCENSION 95 1084 111 1290 ASSUMPTION 27 298 33 358 ASVOYELLES 47 646 38 731 BEAUREGARD 55 480 74 609 BIENVILLE 32 160 43 235 BOSSIER 150 1314 192 1656 CADDO 225 3260 268 3753 CALCASIEU 102 3256 148 3506 CALLOSIEU 102 3256 148 3506 CALLOSIEU 102 3256 148 3506 CALLOSIEU 102 3256 148 26 210	TABLE MDP2. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS MARRIED, BY RESIDENCE OF BRIDE AND GROOM LOUISIANA, 1997						
PARISH GROOM ONLY BRIDE AND GROOM BRIDE ONLY TOTAL ACADIA 4532 62752 5176 72460 ACADIA 53 7770 74 887 ALLEN 45 342 47 4387 ALLEN 45 342 47 428 ASCENSION 95 1084 111 1290 ASSUMPTION 27 298 33 358 AVOYELLES 47 646 38 731 BEAUREGARD 55 480 74 609 BIENVILLE 32 160 43 225 CADDO 225 3260 268 3753 CALCASIEU 102 3256 148 3506 CALLDWELL 22 162 19 203 CAMERON 15 106 7 128 CATAHOULA 16 168 26 210 CATHOULA 16 168 26		,					
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AVOYELLES	ASCENSION	95	1084	111	1290		
BEAUREGARD 55 480 74 609 BIENVILLE 32 160 43 235 BOSSIER 150 1314 192 1656 CADDO 225 3260 268 3753 CALCASIEU 102 3256 148 3506 CALDWELL 22 162 19 203 CALDWELL 22 162 19 203 CATAHOULA 16 168 26 210 CATAHOULA 16 168 26 210 CATHOULA 16 168 26 210 CONCORDIA 27 294 39 360 DESOTO 38 264 46 348 EAST CARROLL 10 58 10 78 E FELICIANA 46 250 35 351 E FELICIANA 46 250 35 351 FRANKLIN 19 324 36 379	ASSUMPTION	27	298	33	358		
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	ST HELENA	9	34	7	50		

TABLE MDP2. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS MARRIED, BY RESIDENCE OF BRIDE AND GROOM LOUISIANA, 1997						
	PARISH OF RESIDENCE					
PARISH	GROOM ONLY	BRIDE AND GROOM	BRIDE ONLY	TOTAL		
ST JAMES	29	184	33	246		
ST JOHN	45	608	58	711		
ST LANDRY	97	1186	102	1385		
ST MARTIN	48	624	65	737		
ST MARY	30	950	29	1009		
ST TAMMANY	109	2570	127	2806		
TANGIPAHOA	83	1752	47	1882		
TENSAS	10	90	8	108		
TERREBONNE	59	1748	66	1873		
UNION	36	214	30	280		
VERMILION	46	690	54	790		
VERNON	119	952	61	1132		
WASHINGTON	30	664	50	744		
WEBSTER	52	554	63	669		
W BATON ROUGE	38	250	59	347		
WEST CARROLL	16	108	24	148		
W FELICIANA	36	94	20	150		
WINN	36	248	21	305		
UNKNOWN STATE*	1	-	4	5		
OUT OF STATE**	1055	5398	411	6864		

^{*}UNKNOWN PARISH AND STATE OF RESIDENCE ASSUMED LOUISIANA RESIDENTS
**OUT OF STATE RESIDENTS NOT INCLUDED IN STATE TOTAL